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PROCEEDINGS OF H.M. STEAM-VESSEL "SPITFIRE" IN THE BLACK SEA.—*T. Spratt, Commander.*

*Remarks on the Anchorage off Erekli.*

The bottom in Erekli Bay is clay under sand, affording good holding ground; but it is not a safe anchorage against a west and N.W. gale unless anchored well up in the Bay between Cape Baba and the ancient mole, so as to obtain some shelter from those winds. The S.W. gales seem not to blow home or to bring a sea that would endanger a vessel well found in cables and anchors. The light over Cape Baba is visible eight to nine miles distant.

*Remarks on the Roadstead of Kosloo.*

The accompanying survey of the Roadstead of Kosloo will sufficiently show it to be only a summer anchorage for steamers and coasters. The traders resort to it in May for the shipment of coal, anchoring to the N.E. of the valley so as to get better shelter from the point: the wind being in general to the east of N.E. The bottom is sand under 12 fathoms water, and mud and sand in deeper water. With this plan the lead will be sufficient guide for anchoring, or the extreme west Cape kept open of Alesso Point will lead to a good berth at a quarter of a mile from the shore; but to expedite the embarkation of coal a nearer berth may be taken.

During the month of May the coast is sometimes subject to a N.N.E. gale; which on one occasion caused the wreck of eight or  
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nine vessels. During June, July, August, and September, the coast is said to be perfectly safe. The locality is best distinguished by the houses near the shore, there being no other village or similar settlement upon the whole coast between Erekli and Amastros, and the land about it presenting no remarkable object, the coast being generally bordered by high bold mountains covered with forests.

*Report on the Turkish Coal Mines near Erekli.*

H.M. steam-vessel *Spitfire*, Constantinople, 3rd April, 1854.

Sir,—I have the honour to report my return from the examination of the coal mines in the vicinity of Erekli and to communicate the following facts connected with them.

Coal is found in almost every valley opening to the sea from about five miles N.E. of Erekli as far as Amastros, and at distances of from a quarter of a mile to three miles from the shore. In several of these valleys parties of Croats have, for ten or twelve years, been employed in working the coal seams cropping out on their sides; and as some of the valleys contain as many as seven or eight seams, good and bad, these have been indiscriminately worked until a want of capital and skill have obliged them to abandon these localities for others nearer the surface. This coal, being unskilfully worked, from the worst part of the seam, and much exposed before shipping, reached Constantinople in a greatly deteriorated condition, as well as being of an inferior quality through mixing the coals from several seams.

The chief locality for good coal is at the valley of Kosloo, about sixteen miles N.E. of Erekli, where the Turkish Government have an establishment under the direction of two civil engineers, Messrs. Barkley, who are in receipt of a fixed salary with an advantage, in addition, in proportion to the quantity of coal obtained. At this time four Englishmen, miners, belong to the establishment as foremen to the native workers; besides which are some Poles and Hungarians and a few Servians and Bosnians.

The natives employed are Turks from the neighbouring villages, who are forced to work out their taxes by fifty to sixty days' labour at these mines. They are, consequently, obtained with great difficulty, quit upon every opportunity, and labour with no interest; the foreigners employed being the only men paid by the Turkish Government, and these only at intervals of three, six, or nine months.

In this valley of Kosloo there are no less than nine seams of coal, but only four at present worked; the thickest of these seams is eighteen feet and the least about three feet. Some of these would not pay to work and those now worked have only a portion of their coal good. A tram road leads from all these mines to the shore at Kosloo, the extremity being carried out upon the east point of the bay so as to enable boats to lie under eight or nine shutes and receive the coal direct from the trucks. According to the statement of the Engineer and Director, Mr. Barkley, 300 tons can be shipped per day, weather permitting. Some of these mines penetrate three or four hundred yards into the mountain.

Under his skilful engineering and mining operations the Director, when supplied with men in sufficient number, is enabled to procure on an average per month of 2,500 tons from the four Kosloo mines. This amount he can ensure even with the present means at his command, and for a period of three years; thus averaging from the Kosloo mines only about 30,000 tons of good coal per annum.

At the present moment there is lying adjacent to the railway in the Kosloo valley about 9,000 tons of coal in three or four heaps at the pit's mouth. Twenty-five tons of coal was shipped in H.M. steam-vessel *Spitfire* from these heaps, taking a portion from each of what is technically termed "picked near the pit's mouth."

The coal of the three heaps have a close resemblance to each other, and in the furnace, either for steaming or economy, have no appreciable difference, the whole being very like Newcastle coal in weight and appearance also.

The result of the trials of coal from each pit or mine, as given in the Engineer's report, after nineteen hours' steaming on the 1st grade with both boilers, shows that the Kosloo coal is equal to the very best Newcastle coal, having a loss of about 7 per cent only in clinker and ashes. The Chief Engineer of *Spitfire* reports that the coal used from the heaps when "unpicked" would not show a loss of more than from 8 to 10 per cent, the whole being in general large.

Thus there is lying at Kosloo, ready for shipment 9,000 tons of coal equal to good Newcastle, and if shipped into steamers direct from this valley would suffer little or no diminution of its value; but, as the quality of the coal is of a delicate and friable nature, it easily crumbles into small fragments, and would lose much of its value on being often transhipped and long exposed to the air, the condition in which a great portion of it reaches Constantinople.

The coal has been worked at the Kosloo mines at a cost of as little as six shillings per ton; but as the mine is frequently allowed to lie idle, for want of a supply of candles from the Government and the absenting of the forced labourers, the renewing of the operation brings the average cost ten or twelve shillings per ton. Last year the coal was sold by the Turkish Government, or Company acting for the Government, at 17s. per ton at Kosloo and £1 per ton at Erekli; to which place it is transhipped as the depot and residence of the Turkish Director of the mines, who is also the Governor of the place. And as in this transhipment it is liable to be mixed with the inferior coal also sent there from the mines worked by the Croats, it is, therefore, more likely to be of much less value at Erekli than at Kosloo; but in the latter place it can only be shipped in fine weather or with southerly winds, whilst at the former it can be shipped at all times. It is, therefore, most desirable that the coal supplied to our ships from these mines should be shipped direct from the Kosloo valley or selected from the coal heaps stored at Erekli by one of the Engineers, Messrs. Barkley, who have offered their services through me for such a purpose, to prevent the Government being imposed upon with the inferior "Croat coal," as in the case of the *Triton*; that very coal having

been previously condemned by these gentlemen when lying at the mouth of the valley it was worked from, and by them reported to the Turkish Director at Erekli as unfit for use. But as it is to the interest of this official to send to Constantinople as much coal as possible, the report of Messrs. Barkley was unheeded; and the coal, on arrival, not finding a sale at Constantinople, was finally handed over for the use of *Triton* on her application.

The importance of obtaining from these mines a coal to ensure "full speed" when necessary, induces me to dwell upon the above point and to recommend the acceptance of the voluntary services of these gentlemen, under sanction of the Turkish Authorities, whenever Turkish coal is required by our Government.

At Erekli there are at present only two parcels of coal, one of about 450 tons and the other nearly 200 tons. The former is coal procured by the Croats and of an inferior quality; the small parcel of 200 tons is from a seam of coal recently opened by the Turkish Government under Mr. Barkley, at about nine miles from Erekli, and one from the sea. Thirteen and a half tons of this coal was shipped at Erekli by the *Spitfire*, and found to be equal to that from the Kosloo valley.

During the year 1853 about 50,000 tons of coal were exported from this district.

There were found lying at Erekli and moored in the bay west of the town between twenty and thirty vessels, from 100 to 150 tons, which are employed during the summer in the transport of the coal. Small caciques are so employed during the winter, as weather permits, and bring coal to Erekli from all the valleys' mouths where it is piled. Country vessels lie moored, head and stern, here during the whole winter and are said to be perfectly safe from every gale although exposed to some fetch from the S.W.

I have the honour, &c.,

T. SPRATT, Commander.

To Admiral J. W. D. Dundas, C.B.,  
Commander-in-Chief Black Sea, &c. &c. &c.

#### *Report of Proceedings.*

H.M. steam vessel *Spitfire*, Kavarna Bay,  
17th April, 1854.

My dear Sir Francis,—I send the enclosed tracing of the Princes Islands' survey in answer to your inquiries about lighthouses at the entrance of the Bosphorus. You will perceive that the southern lighthouse stands on Fahar Bagtcheh Point, and not on the island off it. The light in both lighthouses may be visible at from seven to eight miles.

My last of the 26th ult. informed you that I was ordered to proceed to Erekli, on the south coast of the Black Sea, to inquire about the coal procured near there.

I enclose a copy of my report to the Admiral, which will also inform you of the resources of this interesting and now most important district, since I found that there was coal procured there equal to good Newcastle coal, under the engineering and mining skill of a few Eng-

lishmen, employed by the Government. But the resources of the district are not properly developed through an insufficient supply of means, long arrears of pay, and the isolation of the position during the winter season, and mismanagement and jobbing of the Turkish officials and Governor, who never visit it, and reside at a distance of twelve hours by land journeying.

I have sent a collection of such fossils as I could procure to my friend Professor Forbes and the Geological Society, so as to have the age of this coal fully understood. And I cannot but believe it to be of the true coal measures, although very incompetent to give an opinion.

After returning to Constantinople I was ordered back to the Black Sea to join the Admiral at Varna or Kavarna, and to survey Bourgas and Kavarna Bays; and arrived at the latter bay on the 4th, finding the fleets anchored off the town of Baljik to the west of Kavarna; and a most splendid anchorage it is for a fleet, perfectly sheltered from the prevailing winds. The depth moderate, viz., 10 and 12 fathoms two and three miles off, and the bottom a tough clay, with the water shoaling gradually to the coast.

On rejoining the Admiral, I was ordered to proceed to Varna to take Capt. Brock to survey the lake and fortifications. We occupied ourselves whilst having this opportunity to survey the bay and interior on a scale double that of the Russian plan, viz., three inches to the mile; this is in progress, and will better show this important place and anchorage, since the fortifications as represented on the Russian chart, are quite wrong.

I returned with Captain Brock on the 11th to the fleet, where he rejoined the *Queen*, to which he is at present attached. I was immediately ordered to commence a survey of the bay to the west of Baljik. But this was prevented from being completed by a gale from the N.E., and by being ordered to recover a barge of one of the ships that had parted during the night, and as she was found stranded near Varna, it detained me two days till the weather moderated. I rejoined the fleet yesterday, and am now ordered back to Varna, and from thence to Bourgas to survey it.

We have it still winter, the thermometer being down to freezing at night, and in the day snow and sleet, with an occasional day of sunshine, when the temperature is up to 70°. This incessant hard work and change is telling upon the *Spitfire's* crew, who have had little rest through the winter: at this moment we have nearly half the officers and men in sick list with diarrhœa and colds, the result of real good hard work and exposure.

The fleets have just sailed on their war mission, with beautiful weather, for it cleared up a splendid day just at starting.

The French did not receive their declaration of war before Good Friday, so it was celebrated on Saturday by both fleets with the ceremony of manning yards, hoisting the colours of the three nations engaged against Russia, with salutes and cheering. But it was done in a snow-storm, such is the variability and severity of the Black Sea

weather even at this time. But it does not damp the ardour of the men in the fleet, who are ready for anything.

The little *Spitfire* is thus left alone to recruit her crew and continue our surveying of which we have plenty in hand. But unfortunately have no time to complete any on the moment. Nearly all are snatches of surveying work as the opportunity offers in connection with the various missions and duties on which we are sent. Being war-times, we must endeavour to meet all other requirements from us in the best manner. The little tracing of Kosloo was a hurried survey during our visit to the coal mines, but is available for steamers resorting to it for coal. We have a plan of Erekli also on board. My Cretan charts were left at the Ambassador's for safety on entering the Black Sea. The new charts of the Bosphorus, by Captain Legard, enabled me to put into our Princes Island survey the entrance, but between our own points.

The Russians have made no great advances on this side of the Dobrava, but I suppose are only waiting to cross and advance in greater force; unless the arrival of the French and English fleets have caused them to halt.

I am, &c.

T. SPRATT.

Rear-Admiral Sir F. Beaufort, G.C.B., &c.

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VOYAGE OF H.M. STEAM SLOOP "VIXEN."—*F. L. Barnard,*  
*Commander.*

(Concluded from page 311.)

After leaving Sandy Point on our passage to the eastward, we stood close to Cape Niger, and between it and Elizabeth Island had quarter less 4 fathoms for some time; therefore a large ship should not get in with the S.E. point of Elizabeth Island.

We anchored in Gregory Bay in 13 fathoms, Gregory Point bearing S.b.W. about three quarters of a mile from the north extreme of the high bank which extends from Cape Gregory.

A N.E.b.E. course took us from Gregory Bay to the east shore of the First Narrows. Before getting abreast of the Triton Bank the summit of Mount Aymond became visible over the low land, and in clear weather it is a famous mark for verifying a ship's position.

Off Cape Orange the ebb tide caused a heavy ripple over the shoal, which must be very dangerous for a sailing vessel without a commanding breeze. When the Direction Hill bore W.S.W. an E.b.N. course took us out clear of the Sarmiento Bank.

During a run of forty-eight hours from the entrance of the Straits to Stanley Harbour, Port William, Falkland Islands, we experienced little or no current, and the weather being rather hazy saw no land until we made out the high mountains over the settlement. We passed between Beauchene Island and the Sea Lion Islands without seeing